College of Agriculture Mandsaur, the Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic plants (CIMAP) and National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI) at Lucknow have done notable work in this area. The office of the Central Bureau of Narcotics has been taking suitable steps to disseminate the results of such studies for the benefit of the opium cultivators in the above areas.

Soiled Notes

3146. SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Reserve Bank of India has imported a machine from Germany for destreying several mutilated and soiled currency notes; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Two currency disintegrator and briquetting system have been imported from M/s. Gieseeke and Devrient GmbH, Germany which are in operation since December, 1996 at the Reserve Bank of India's New Delhi office. The system is an integrated unit with a capacity of 300 Kgs of currency notes per hour and comprises the following features:

(i) Electromachanical belt conveyor: This conveys the notes into the granulator.

(ii) Prescrusher/Granulator: The prescrusher crushes the note bundles into small pieces. They are then granulated into small granules (3mm x 3mm) by means of fixed/moveable knives.

(iii) Briquetting unit: The granules are then sucked from the granulator through a blower fan and compresed into '2' diameter briquettes by a compression pump.

This method of destroying notes is environment friendly as the process is devoid of any smoke emission.

Salt Industries

3147. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA:
SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Salt industries functioning in Public Sector in the country;

(b) whether any special efforts are being made to promote the export of salt by increasing its production;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Six salt works are functioning in Public Sector.

(b) to (d) Yes, Sir. The following measures have been initiated to promote export by increasing salt production:-

(i) Salt exports have been exempted from the levy of cess.

(ii) Railway is according 'B' Priority for export of salt by rail.

(iii) Establishment of 100% export oriented units (EOU) is being encouraged.

(iv) Long term and short term measures are taken to improve the salt loading rate at Kandla Port.

(v) Setting up of salt refineries is being encouraged to meet the demand of high grade salt.

[English]

Demonstration by All India Gramin Bank Workers

3148. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether officers and workers of the All India Gramin Bank held country-wide demonstrations on January 28, 1997 to protest against the negative attitude of the Government towards their demands;

(b) if so, the details of their demands; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to meet their demands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (c) Some of the Associations of Officers and Employees of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), inter-alia, including All India Gramin Bank Workers Organisation and All India Gramin Bank Officers Association have represented against non-implementation of the VIth Bipartite Settlement in favour of RRB employees.

As regards the extension of Sixty Bipartite Agreement between employees, Officers of Commercial Banks and Indian Banks' Association to the employees of RRBs, the matter was taken by some of the RRB employees to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court, however did not grant any relief and instead observed that they may seek reliefs available to them under the Industrial disputes Act.

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have appointed a three member Committee to examine and suggest the changes in the salary and allowances of the employees of RRBs, which may be considered desirable and feasible. It is expected that the employees will present their view point before the Committee so that it can make considered recommendations on their demands.

Turnover of STC

3149. SHRI DHIRENDRA AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the total business as well as the turnover of the STC is going down;